



GENERAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

March 2007-INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EDITION

LITERACY TRAINING FOR WOMEN INCREASES INCOMES

The Afghan Women's Education Center is providing literacy training for members of women shuras in Gardiz, Ahmad Aba, Sayed Karam and Jaji districts of Paktya Province. The training, funded through small grants from Counterpart International, includes literacy courses and an income generation and micro-loan education program. To date, the grant has helped 600 older female students learn to read and write.

WOMEN TRAINED IN LIVESTOCK CARE

Women veterinary assistants participating in USAID's Alternative Livelihoods program continue to support the Eastern Region's livestock production by training over 1,500 women in southern Kunar and eastern Nangarhar. All the women trained are responsible for two to five cattle. As a testament to their success, rural communities and government officials continue to praise this program and to request its expansion to other districts in the region.

"Women are largely responsible for tending to animals in Afghanistan. There really is a need for women veterinarians to work with them."

- Fareba Miriam



Photo: USAID/Jeremy Foster



Afghan women, working as a team, weaving a carpet on a vertical loom in a studio in Kabul. Photo: Daniel Kennedy

'MADE BY AFGHAN WOMEN' CARPETS

The 'Made by Afghan Women' (MBAW) carpet label was launched in February at New York's Rubin Museum. The press conference was attended by media outlets such as Bloomberg International, Reuters, the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune, as well as major carpet trade publications.

More than 100 carpet buyers and supporters of the Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF) attended the evening reception, at which AWBF presented a carpet for permanent display at the Rubin Museum. AWBF sold nearly \$10,000 in carpets during the reception itself and connected with a number of potential buyers, including Saxony Carpets (expected to become the first MBAW sales point in New York), Oriental Rug Retailers of America, and Megerian Carpets.

Aid to Artisans, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating economic opportunities for crafts people in the developing world, took the remaining carpets and will host an exhibition in Hartford, Connecticut to promote MBAW's AfghanMark brand and to sell the rest of the carpets. For more information on this project, please visit <http://www.afghanmark.com>.



GENERAL UPDATE (continued)

MARCH 2007

HERAT FARMERS CONTINUE GREENHOUSE SUCCESS

Tomato and eggplant seeds were distributed to 70 greenhouse owners in February and the Agro-Enterprise Support Program in Herat is in the final stages of selecting 30 new greenhouse recipients to join its successful USAID-funded greenhouse project. Farmers participating in the greenhouse project have nearly doubled their annual incomes and enthusiastically shared their results with non-participating farmers. The success of the greenhouse project and the word-of-mouth endorsements by participants have led over 100 farmers to seek loans to finance their own greenhouse construction.



In Herat Province, farmer Mola Shah Gool earned \$660 from his greenhouse last winter during a time period when he normally has no income. Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF AFGHANISTAN

James Kunder, Acting Deputy Administrator of USAID, presented two 86-volume hard-bound sets of all Official Gazettes of the Government of Afghanistan dating back to 1964 to the National Assembly Library. Decades of war left libraries and government institutions lacking a comprehensive compilation of the laws of Afghanistan. In addition to compiling all Gazettes for national distribution in print and dvd format, USAID has supported the National Assembly Library by providing computers, furniture, books, training, and technical assistance.

PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAM CLOSEOUT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Afghanistan Primary Education Project recently ended its three year program and presented the following accomplishments:

- 170,000 over-age and out-of-school youth were educated in grades 1 through 6. The project graduated 152,000 students (a 90% completion rate), 55% of whom were female.
- 6,800 teachers were trained in their subject areas and in effective teaching methods.
- 65,000 primary school teachers across the



Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

country were trained via a weekly radio based teacher training program in Dari and Pashtu.

-- 31.5 million of USAID's total of 59 million Ministry of Education textbooks were printed in Dari and Pashtu through this program.

PROGRESS TO DATE

ROADS: Construction is complete on over 4,500 km of highways and provincial roads throughout Afghanistan; 1,700 km were funded completely by USAID.

AGRICULTURE: The value of agriculture production has increased approx. \$1.75 billion between 2002 and 2006.

ECONOMY: In 2006, \$440 million in total domestic revenue was collected, largely through improved customs collection. The central bank now holds more than \$2.5 billion in reserves.

HEALTH: According to the Ministry of Public Health, 82% of people today have access to basic health services, up from just 9% in early 2002.

EDUCATION: According to Ministry of Education data, 5.8 million students are enrolled in school, versus 900,000 under the Taliban; 38% are girls vs. none under Taliban

ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS: Over \$22 million in wages have been provided to nearly 280,000 farmers to offer a viable alternative to poppy cultivation. These wages have injected significant cash into a struggling rural economy.